

# Department of Classics and Ancient History Summer Colloquium

## **'Communicating Classics'**

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

### **Abstracts**

Desiree Arbo

#### Questions of Genre and Reception: The case of José Manuel Peramás' Laudationes Quinque (1766)

From their arrival in the late sixteenth century until their expulsion from America in 1767 members of the Jesuit Order acted as missionaries, confessors and educators in the New World. Their networks of colleges functioned as the main sites of creation and dissemination of knowledge about the Americas, and Latin continued to be the academic language for the creoles or American-born descendants of Spaniards. The Jesuits cultivated a variety of genres, including the funeral oration. A year before the expulsion, the new printing press of the University of Córdoba published five Latin orations in honour of its founder Ignacio Duarte y Quirós. This paper examines questions of genre and performance of Peramás' funeral orations as a way to explore wider issues of the reception of classical texts and classical learning in Spanish America. Genres are determined by context, provenance and content as well as by form. In previous papers I have discussed the provenance and content of the speeches at length – Peramás' agenda, as it were. But who was the audience? In what kind of environment were the speeches performed? Was Peramás trying to persuade his audience, or did he tell them what they already believed?

*Desiree is a third-year PhD student at Warwick co-supervised by Classics and History. Her research project explores the reception of classical texts and classical learning in eighteenth-century Paraguay and the Rio de la Plata. She is interested in reception and histories of classical traditions, as well as the history of education, intellectual history and what is broadly known as 'Jesuit Studies'.*

Marta Barbato

### Imitations in the monetary pool of the late Roman Republic

Increased attention has recently been given to the imitation phenomenon of both Roman Republican bronze coins as well as other ‘foreign’ coins, which were in circulation in Italy during the last two centuries of the Republic. This research has illuminated two important aspects of the circulation of small foreign bronze from Italian contexts: pseudo-mints and the imitation of Roman bronzes, namely semisses and quadrantes. Both phenomena can be detected and analysed in the so called ‘sottosuolo urbano 2’ assemblage of coins from Rome.

Consisting of c. 2300 bronze coins in circulation during the last two centuries of the Republic provides, the assemblage provides a reliable picture of the circulating monetary pool which was in use on a daily basis.

One phenomenon often detectable in the coins is the imitation of specific ‘foreign’ issues, which circulated at the turn of the first century in Italy. While the Pseudo-Panormos group series with the standing warrior reverse are relatively common, the Ebusan/Pseudo-Ebusan/Massaliot imitations are, at this stage, not.

The unofficial imitation (both in good or coarse style) of late Republican bronzes (1st cent. BC) is another aspect deserving of further examination because large assemblages of these coins from site-finds have never been published. These small imitative bronzes raise the question of whether or not they were ever officially integrated in the monetary pool during last two centuries of the Republic.

### *Biography*

Paul Grigsby

### The Festival of the Daidala at Plataia: A Classical Conundrum

Every fifty-nine or sixty years at the city of Plataia in Boiotia, the combined Boiotians celebrated a festival called the Great Daidala. Fourteen wooden images - one chosen as the 'bride' of Zeus – were driven upon carts to the top of Mt Kithairon and burnt in a fire visible even in the Peloponnese, each of these images having been crafted at a celebration of the Small Daidala, a Plataian-only festival which occurred every six years. According to Pausanias, the Great Daidala celebrated the reconciliation of the ever-quarrelling Zeus and Hera, but its internal organization and the mathematics of its periodicity were linked specifically to a more humdrum reconciliation, that of the exiled Plataians with their fellow Boiotians.

Much of the work on the Daidala has focussed on uncovering the original rite (or rites) onto which the *aition* of Boiotian unity was later grafted, the complexity of the festival allowing numerous contradictory conclusions. But with the original meaning eclipsed by the later political one, this paper will examine instead the structure and periodicity of the festival as described by Pausanias, linking the numbers he gives – 14, 6 and 59 – to Boiotian history and political make-up, and addressing the puzzle which plagued Pausanias almost two thousand years ago: the unfortunate fact that fourteen times six does not – and never did – equal sixty.

*Paul is a second year PhD student at Warwick based within the Department of Classics and Ancient History. His thesis explores the development of Boiotian Identity especially as revealed through the medium of shared religious cult. His main interests are in Greek religion, mythology, and identity.*

Miriam Hay

### Reading Early Christian sarcophagi as monuments of *paideia*

The concept of *paideia*, or classical education and intellectual culture, has been proven to be a useful tool for understanding the reception of the classical past in Late Antique and Early Christian literature, but has only fairly recently started to be applied to art. Yet Early Christian art had first been born within the context of this existing Graeco-Roman elite culture, at a time when the display of this traditional *paideia* was arguably becoming more valued as a symbol of status and stability in a rapidly changing society.

This paper will consider the case of Early Christian funerary monuments, as an example of how classical frameworks of both form and thought could shape how Christian content was read and understood in the visual sphere. Although the art of the Christian elite developed a distinctive system of interpretation in the form of typology, it can be demonstrated to continue to rely on the ways of viewing and ideals of competitive display inherited from classical culture, as shaped by traditional education. Art and text work together to present the case of the Early Christian elite for a Christianity that demanded not just to be included within the classical tradition, but celebrated as its culmination.

*Miriam Hay is in the first year of her PhD in Late Antique and Early Christian aesthetics in art and text. Her main interests are the intellectual culture of the late Roman Empire, the reception of classical art and literature, and pagan and Christian identities.*

Vicky Jewell

### Shades of Meaning: Ambiguity in Colour

The study of colour is a natural partner to the discussion of ambiguity. With an infinite capacity for personal interpretation, cultural classification and social definition, colour provides another layer of communication through which to express ambiguity.

The understanding and use of polychrome has been investigated by several different disciplines, both as a philosophical and scientific phenomenon. Within classics, it has faced a cycle of rediscovery and re-evaluation, with previous scholarship either establishing its existence in visual art or establishing the relationships between hues within a single culture. Others address the linguistic challenges inherent in discussion of colour, as much present in contemporary society as it was in the ancient. How do we define one shade across multiple languages? How do we translate a fundamentally different approach to the qualification of colour? These colour associations are dependent upon which social milieu one is situated within, and this cultural mask is amplified when we explore the nexus of ancient societies.

This paper will address, through the viewfinder of specific examples of material culture, how an ancient traveller would have interpreted or misunderstood the messages created in the colour associations of an indigenous culture. Did the hue allow the ambiguity of the object to crystallise into a form that he understood, or did it reveal the conflicting cultural values attached to the artwork? This paper will draw on interdisciplinary research to illustrate and examine how colour in visual and material culture created both a common dialogue and a vessel for further ambiguity.

### *Biography*

Joanna Kemp

Views of Empire in the Antonine Period: The Hadrianeum in Rome and the Parthian Monument in Ephesus

Throughout the first two centuries of the Roman Empire there were plenty of depictions of barbarian peoples and female allegorical representations of foreign nations taking part in empire. Sometimes these were shown in submissive stances and sometimes they were shown to partake willingly. Claude Nicolet (c.1991) demonstrated how geography and the extent of the world was used for political ends under Augustus. This paper compares two later monuments that contain allegorical personifications: the Hadrianeum at Rome and the so-called Parthian monument at Ephesus, and examines how the world was presented the Antonine period. Were these conquered nations or willing participants of the Roman Empire? What can these monuments tell us about notions of Roman imperium *sine fine* or the *oikoumene*? The personifications of the peoples of the empire are diverse, with many different attributes, creating the idea of a far-reaching empire incorporating many different nations. There are questions of the role of the Roman army in securing the pax Romana since in both monuments the idea of Roman military strength is also apparent; notions that peace was secured through Roman arms was still evidently a prominent one. Therefore these monuments show that geography was still used for political or ideological ends after the Augustan age.

*Joanna is a second year part-time PhD student. Her research focuses on Roman views of and interaction with the northern frontiers of the empire. She examines how views of these barbarian nations to the north changed over time and also what caused such changes.*

Stephanie Lane

TBC

Nathan Murphy

### The value of Roman precious metal currency in the imperial period

Discussions of the Roman economy often emphasise monetary reforms as key watersheds in the decline of the denarius coinage system. Decreases in the weight and/or precious metal content of the gold and silver coinages are cited as both the cause and effect of monetary and fiscal problems within the empire. The eventual collapse of the currency in the mid-third century AD is therefore commonly interpreted as an integral part of the wider period of political and social turmoil known as the 'Third Century Crisis', lasting from the assassination of Severus Alexander in AD 235 to the accession of Diocletian in AD 284.

However before we link changes in the coinage to social upheaval it is important to investigate how far the public were aware of, and how they reacted to, monetary reforms. This paper will examine both literary and archaeological evidence to explore the ways in which Roman currency was valued, and how the Roman concept of economic value changed over time. If we can establish how the value of the Roman coinage was determined then it may be possible to explain how changes in the currency were received and the impact of these changes on the economy and Roman society. This could have important implications for both monetary histories of the Roman imperial period and discussion of the crucial events of the third century AD.

### *Biography*

Alexander Peck

### Patria and the Characterisation of the Augustan Principate

In Chapter 35 of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, Augustus informs us that in 2 BC "the Senate, the Equestrians and the entire populace of Rome addressed me as *Pater Patriae*". That this is the concluding statement of Augustus' account of his political, cultural and military achievements illustrates the title's great significance. It appears to represent the crowning achievement of his long political career, and thus serves to define both himself and his regime. Despite (or indeed possibly because of) this title's obvious importance, it has on many occasions been dismissed or passed over by modern day scholarship. There are a few notable exceptions to this. Firstly, there is the highly detailed examination by E. Skard (1933), who examined the title's significance in Roman culture during the republican period, indicating its Greek origins and its use to highlight a particular benefactor or saviour of the Roman State. These ideas were then greatly expanded upon by A. Alföldi (1971) in his highly influential monograph. Finally, and most recently, there is the examination by M. Strothmann (2000), who argues that the appellation reflects and defines Augustus' role as head of the Roman family, the supreme *pater familiæ*. My paper aims to build upon these important foundations. Firstly, it will examine the significance of the concept of *patria*, rather than *parens* and *pater*, considering both its role in and relationship within the context of the Augustan regime. Secondly, it will consider this question from an external perspective. That is to say, rather than try and deduce an internal strategic use of the concept by Augustus and his inner circle, I will discuss the way in which the role and relationship of *patria* to the principate was utilised by contemporary writers to characterise the princeps and his regime.

### *Biography*